

TOWN OF BENNINGTON

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Minutes of the Meeting – August 11, 2020

Selectmen James Cleary, David Hardwick, Sr., and David Foster were present as well as Town Administrator Kristie LaPlante. The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

Highway Department employee Christopher Davies met with the Selectmen to discuss the Selectmen's July 28th decision to place him on a one-week unpaid suspension and change his work schedule. In accordance with RSA 91-A:3-II(a), Chris requested his meeting remain in public session. Chris' position is that his prior written warning for insubordination was more than one year ago and this instance should not be considered a second occurrence, he feels the schedule change is punitive above and beyond a one-week unpaid suspension, he assumed the position of Road Agent for several months in 2019 without any complaints, and questioned the Road Agent's process with handling the initial incident. The Selectmen listened to Chris' feedback but declined to reverse their decisions from July 28 and August 5, 2020.

Chairman Jim Cleary delivered a bid from Norman Mercier for repainting the exterior of the VFW. The three bids received for painting the VFW are as follows:

- Jessica Brooks - \$6,650
- Chris Labreque - \$13,900
- Norman Mercier - \$14,600

The Selectmen discussed their August 5th decision to close the VFW and the cost to bring the building into compliance as indicated by the Department of Labor during their fall visit. With the unknown costs to remedy the handicapped ramp, complete the interior punch list, and renovate the interior to allow handicapped access, the Selectmen voted to table the bids for painting the VFW. It is their intent to revisit the various VFW projects in the spring of 2021.

Chairman Jim Cleary reported to the Board several conversations he has had with Tyler McClure about the use of Sawyer Field for an adult softball league. The softball group has been picking up brush and painting the benches. The Board agreed that if the group intends to play as part of a softball league then they must provide proof of insurance; if the group intends to play pick-up games then use of the field is at their own individual liability. In addition, the users would like to erect a fence at the field and would like the Town to make improvements to the infield. The Town will not allow a permanent fence to be installed because of the many other uses of the property. Because the group did not meet with the Selectmen in advance of a 2020 softball season, the Town has not allocated funds for improvements to Sawyer Field and is not in a position to make any improvements at this time.

Water and Sewer Commissioners Richard Reed and Dennis McKenney met with the Selectmen to discuss the Board of Selectmen's July 28th decision to adjust future payment to Antrim Water/Sewer to recoup the Town's costs for resetting eight manhole covers that were raised in error. Rick and Dennis expressed their frustration that they were not part of the decision-making process to recoup the costs. The Commissioners also relayed the Antrim Water and Sewer Superintendent's frustration with the Selectmen not signing a January Agreement outlining services and costs. The Selectmen agreed to invite the Superintendent in to their next meeting to discuss both issues.

In addition, the Selectmen acted on the following matters:

- Reviewed and approved the Minutes of the Board's August 5, 2020 meeting.
- Reviewed the Highway Department schedule.
- Agreed to allow the Catholic Cemetery to dispose of some stumps from the northwest corner of their property on abutting Town property.
- Discussed Selectmen availability to participate in the monthly Conval Selectmen's Advisory Committee meetings and voted to appoint Town Administrator Kristie LaPlante to represent the Town of Bennington in those meetings.
- Requested the Highway Department to patch around eight sewer manhole covers with cold patch as a temporary solution until the State's pavement contractor begins their work.
- Heard a verbal report from David Hardwick about the Planning Board's August 10th meeting.
- Requested ownership information for the retaining wall between Map 10, Lots 1 and 2.
- Reviewed and approved a Building Permit for Map 7, Lot 31.
- Signed the 2020/2021 Fixed Price Agreement with Ciardelli Fuels for propane and oil.
- Heard a report that the Moderator has official moved the September 8th election site to the Highway Garage located at 198 North Bennington Road.

There being no other business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 7:07 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristie LaPlante, Town Administrator